

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10 Cancelled

Claim 11 (previously presented) The method according to claim 22 further comprising a step of administering to the patient an amount of IFN-alpha 5 that is effective to raise the level of IFN-alpha 5 in the patient.

Claim 12 (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein the liver disease is chronic hepatitis C.

Claim 13 (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein the patient has a liver disease that is cirrhosis of viral origin.

Claims 14 and 15 (cancelled)

Claim 16 (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, comprising administering to the patient a recombinant protein comprising said IFN-alpha 5.

Claim 17 (previously presented) A method according to claim 16, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a prokaryotic host organism.

Claim 18 (previously presented) A method according to claim 16, wherein said

recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in *E. coli*.

Claim 19 (previously presented) A method according to claim 16, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a eukaryotic host organism.

Claim 20 (previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the eukaryotic host organism is *Solanum tuberosum*.

Claim 21 (cancelled)

Claim 22 (currently amended) A method comprising screening a patient suspected of having a liver disease of viral origin, said method comprising assaying liver cells of the patient for reduced levels of IFN-alpha 5.

Claim 23 to 28 (cancelled)